APPENDIX G

ROAD MARCHES AND ASSEMBLY AREAS

When not in contact with the enemy, the SBCT infantry company may have to move long distances to position itself for future operations. This type of movement, called a road march, is planned at company and battalion levels. An assembly area, either the initial assembly area before movement begins or the forward assembly area following the move, is a site at which the unit gathers to prepare for future operations. Preparation activities include receiving and issuing orders, servicing and repairing vehicles, receiving and issuing supplies, and taking care of the personal needs of members of the SBCT infantry company.

Section I. TACTICAL ROAD MARCH

The main purpose of the road march is to relocate rapidly, not to gain contact. It is conducted using fixed speeds and timed intervals. This section examines tactical procedures and considerations for the road march.

G-1. MARCH COLUMNS

The following paragraphs outline the three primary road march techniques. The SBCT infantry company usually executes a road march in column formation.

a. **Open Column.** The open column technique is normally used for daylight marches, though it can be used at night with blackout lights or thermal vision equipment. The distance between vehicles varies, normally from 50 meters to 200 meters, depending on light and weather conditions.

b. **Closed Column.** The closed column technique is normally used for marches conducted during periods of limited visibility. The distance between vehicles is based on the ability to see the vehicle ahead; it is normally less than 50 meters.

c. **Infiltration.** The infiltration technique involves the movement of small groups of personnel or vehicles at irregular intervals. It is used when sufficient time and suitable routes are available and when maximum security, deception, and dispersion are desired. Of the three road march techniques, infiltration provides the best possible passive defense against enemy observation and detection.

G-2. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Standard tasks the SBCT infantry company commander (and subordinate leaders, as necessary) may perform prior to a tactical road march include the following:

- Designate a marshaling area to organize the march column and conduct final inspections and briefings.
- Conduct a METT-TC analysis to determine the enemy situation, including the probability of air or ground attack.
- Establish detailed security measures.
- Designate the movement route, including the start point (SP), required checkpoints, and the RP. Additional control measures the company may need to identify include critical areas, defiles, choke points, rest and maintenance stops, and danger areas.

- Organize, brief, and dispatch the quartering party.
- Specify march speed, movement formations, vehicle and serial intervals, catch-up speed, lighting, and times of critical events.
- Plan for indirect fire support and contingency actions, and rehearse actions on contact. Contingency plans should cover vehicle breakdowns, lost vehicles, and accidents.
- Coordinate for CSS, including refueling, mess operations, vehicle recovery, local police assistance, and medical evacuation.

G-3. QUARTERING PARTY

Whether the SBCT infantry company conducts the road march independently or as part of a battalion or task force, it normally sends out a quartering party to assist it in moving to and occupying a new assembly area. Dispatched prior to the departure of the main body, the SBCT infantry company quartering party assists the battalion quartering party in reconnoitering the route of march. It then conducts its own reconnaissance of the feeder route from the RP to the proposed assembly area and of the assembly area itself. If either the route or the assembly area proves unsatisfactory, the quartering party recommends changes to the SBCT infantry company commander.

NOTE: If the SBCT battalion does not send a quartering party, the SBCT company party assumes sole responsibility for reconnoitering the route of march from SP to RP.

Once the road march begins, members of the quartering party serve as guides along the feeder route and in the assembly area. The size and composition of the party usually is dictated by unit SOP, although it can be adjusted based on specific tactical requirements. Refer to Section II of this appendix for a more detailed discussion of quartering party duties and procedures.

G-4. CONTROL MEASURES

The SBCT infantry company commander uses the control measures discussed in the following paragraphs to assist in controlling the company during the road march.

a. **Graphics.** Road march graphics should include, at a minimum, the SP, the RP, and the route.

(1) ***Start Point.*** The SP location represents the beginning of the road march route. It should be located on easily recognizable terrain. It is far enough away from the company's initial position to allow individual elements to organize into the march formation at the appropriate speed and interval. The SBCT infantry company commander should determine the time required to move to the SP. This will help the company arrive at the SP at the time designated in the SBCT infantry battalion OPORD and to continue movement onto the route of march without stopping.

(2) ***Release Point.*** The RP marks the end of the route of march. It is also located on easily recognizable terrain. Elements do not halt at the RP. They continue to their respective positions with assistance from guides, waypoints, and other graphic control measures.

(3) ***Route.*** The route is the path of travel connecting the SP and RP.

b. **Digital Overlays.** Digital overlays, which serve as a backup to maps with overlays, can provide valuable assistance for digitally equipped units. They display waypoints and other information concerning unit locations along the route of march that can assist the units in navigating accurately. When employing analog units with SBCT units, leaders must coordinate arrangements to prevent loss of combat efficiency.

c. **Critical Points.** Critical points are locations along the route of march where terrain or other factors may interfere with movement or where timing is critical. They are represented using checkpoints. The SP, RP, and all checkpoints are considered critical points.

d. **Strip Maps.** A strip map can assist in navigation. It should include the SP, RP, checkpoints, marshaling areas, and refuel on the move (ROM) sites; it also lists the distances between these points. Detailed "blowup" sketches should be used for marshaling areas, locations of scheduled halts, ROM sites, and other places where confusion is likely to occur. Strip maps are included as an annex to the movement order; if possible, all vehicle drivers should receive a copy.

e. **Visual Signals.** Regardless of whether it is analog or digital, when observing radio silence during a road march, the unit may use hand-and-arm signals, flags, and lights as the primary means of passing information between vehicles and moving units.

f. **Traffic Control.** The headquarters controlling the march may post road guides and traffic signs at designated traffic control points (TCPs). At critical points, guides assist in creating a smooth flow of traffic along the march route. Military police, members of the SBCT battalion reconnaissance platoon, or designated elements from the quartering party may serve as guides. They should have equipment or markers that allow march elements to identify them in darkness or other limited visibility conditions. There is normally an RP for every echelon of command conducting the road march (that is, there is an SBCT battalion RP followed by an SBCT infantry company RP). Traffic problems may arise if actions at each of these points are not well-rehearsed.

G-5. ACTIONS DURING THE MARCH

The following considerations apply during the conduct of the march.

a. **Movement to the SP.** The SBCT infantry company must arrive at the SP at the time designated in the SBCT battalion OPORD. The company commander may need to designate a marshaling area in which the quartering party and the main body can organize their march columns and conduct final inspections and briefings before movement. If the situation dictates, units may move directly to the column from their current positions. To avoid confusion during the initial movement, leaders of all company elements should conduct a reconnaissance of the route to the SP, issue clear movement instructions, and conduct thorough rehearsals, paying particular attention to signals and timing.

b. **Orientation.** Every vehicle in the formation has an assigned sector of orientation. Each vehicle commander should assign sectors of observation to crewmen to achieve 360-degree observation.

c. **Halts.** While taking part in a road march, the SBCT infantry company must be prepared to conduct both scheduled and unscheduled halts. Security during halts normally involves a combination of dispersion, weapons orientation, clearance of terrain that dominates the route of march, and employment of infantry squads to secure danger areas.

(1) ***Scheduled Halts.*** Scheduled halts are conducted to permit maintenance, refueling, and personal relief activities and to allow other traffic to pass.

(a) The movement order establishes the time and duration of scheduled halts. Unit SOP specifies actions to be taken during halts, but the first priority must always be to establish and maintain local security. A maintenance halt of 15 minutes is usually scheduled after the first hour of the march, with a 10-minute halt every two hours thereafter.

(b) During long marches, the unit may conduct a ROM operation. The composition of the ROM site depends both on OPSEC considerations and on the refueling capability of assets at the ROM site. The OPORD specifies the amount of fuel or the amount of time at the pump for each vehicle. It also gives instructions for OPSEC at the ROM site and at the staging area to which vehicles move after refueling.

(2) ***Unscheduled.*** The SBCT infantry company conducts unscheduled halts when the unit encounters unexpected obstacles or contaminated areas or when a disabled vehicle temporarily blocks the route.

(a) When an unscheduled halt occurs, each vehicle commander sends a messenger to the vehicle to his front. The messenger obtains (or, if applicable, provides) information on the reason for the halt and on required follow-on actions. The movement commander then takes any further actions required to determine and or eliminate the cause of the halt.

(b) A disabled vehicle must not obstruct traffic for lengthy periods. The crew should move the vehicle off the road immediately, report its status, establish security, and post guides to direct traffic. If possible, the crew repairs the vehicle and rejoins the rear of the column. Vehicles that drop out of the column should return to their original positions only when the column has halted. Until then, they move at the rear just ahead of the trail element, which usually is made up of the security element and assets designated to recover company vehicles. Assistance for recovery and repair of broken or damaged equipment is received from the CRT attached to the battalion. (The XO normally handles security if he is not part of the quartering party). If the crew cannot repair the vehicle, the trail element or CRT recovers it.

G-6. ACTIONS ON CONTACT

If enemy contact occurs during the road march, the SBCT infantry company executes actions on contact as described in Chapter 4 of this manual.

G-7. ACTIONS AT THE RP

The SBCT infantry company moves through the battalion RP without stopping. The company's guide picks up the unit there and guides it to the company RP. Each SBCT platoon then picks up its assigned guide and follows his signals to its position in the assembly area. Depending on terrain and the equipment available (GPS or POSNAV), guides and marking materials may be posted at or near exact vehicle locations. (Assembly areas procedures are covered in the following section.)

Section II. ASSEMBLY AREAS

An assembly area is a site at which maneuver units prepare for future operations. A well-planned assembly area has the following characteristics:

- Concealment from enemy ground and air observation.
- A location on defensible terrain.
- Good drainage and a surface that can support tracked and wheeled vehicles.
- Suitable entrances, exits, and internal roads or trails.
- Sufficient space for dispersion of vehicles and equipment.

G-8. QUARTERING PARTY OPERATIONS

Normally, the SBCT infantry company employs a quartering party (also known as an advance party) to assist in the occupation of an assembly area. The quartering party is established in accordance with battalion or company SOP; for example, it may consist of one vehicle per platoon along with a vehicle from the headquarters section. The company XO, 1SG, or a senior NCO normally leads the quartering party. The quartering party's actions in preparing the assembly area include the following:

- Reconnoiter for enemy forces and NBC contamination.
- Evaluate the condition of the route to the assembly area and the suitability of the area itself (drainage, space, and internal routes). If the area is unsatisfactory, the quartering party requests permission from the SBCT infantry company commander to find a new location.
- Organize the area based on the SBCT battalion commander's guidance; designate and mark tentative locations for platoons, CP vehicles, and trains.
- Improve and mark entrances, exits, and internal routes.
- Mark bypasses or remove obstacles (within the party's capabilities).
- Mark tentative vehicle locations.

G-9. OCCUPATION OF THE ASSEMBLY AREA

Once the AA is prepared, the quartering party awaits the arrival of the SBCT infantry company, maintaining surveillance and providing security of the area within its capabilities.

a. Quartering party members guide the company as a whole from the battalion RP to the company RP. They then guide individual elements from the company RP to their individual locations in the AA. SOPs and prearranged signals and markers (for day or night occupation) should be used to assist vehicle commanders in finding their positions. The key consideration is to move quickly, both to clear the route for other units and to assume designated positions in the AA.

b. The SBCT infantry company may occupy the AA as an independent element or as part of a battalion (Figure G-1, page G-6). In either situation, the SBCT infantry company occupies its positions upon arrival using the procedures for hasty occupation of a BP. The company commander establishes local security and coordinates with adjacent units. He assigns weapons orientation and a sector of responsibility for each platoon and subordinate element. If the company occupies the AA alone, it establishes a perimeter defense.

Figure G-1. SBCT infantry company assembly area example.

G-10. ACTIONS IN THE ASSEMBLY AREA

Following occupation, the SBCT infantry company and its individual elements can prepare for future operations by conducting troop-leading procedures and priorities of work in accordance with battalion and company OPORDs. These preparations include the following:

- Establish and maintain security (at the appropriate REDCON level).
- Employ infantry squads to implement security measures as necessary, including protection against enemy infiltration.
- Conduct TLP.
- Perform maintenance on vehicles and communications equipment.
- Verify weapons system status and conduct test firing and other necessary preparations. (The SBCT infantry company normally must coordinate test-firing activities with its higher headquarters.)
- Conduct resupply operations, including refueling and rearming.
- Conduct rehearsals and other training for upcoming operations.
- Conduct PCCs and PCIs based on time available.
- Adjust SBCT infantry company task organization as necessary.

- Account for company personnel and assigned sensitive items.
- Reestablish vehicle load plans.